



STATE OF MICHIGAN

**Family  
Independence  
Agency**

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DOUGLAS E. HOWARD, Director

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To the editor:

The holiday season is a joyous time for children. Families gather to share festive dinners, sing seasonal songs, worship together and exchange presents. During this time of the year, children accumulate fond memories that often last for lifetimes.

Children without families may have different holiday memories, sad recollections of feeling lonely, or homesick, or rejected. While other children wish for presents, they wish for loving families and permanent homes.

The holiday season is an appropriate time to give thanks for the many selfless adoptive families who have taken children out of the public child welfare system and into their hearts and homes. It's also a time for remembering that hundreds more Michigan children need loving families and permanent homes. Children of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are waiting for families to make a difference in their lives.

We, in Michigan, can be proud of our successes in helping children achieve permanence through adoption. Last year, public and private adoption agencies in the state finalized more than 2,900 adoptions. In 1997, the federal Adoption 2002 Program was initiated to double the number of children adopted from the public child welfare system. Michigan increased finalized adoptions from 1,905 in fiscal year 1997 to 2,775 in fiscal year 2000, a 46% increase.

For fiscal years 1998, 1999 and 2000, Michigan earned \$3,774,382 through the financial incentive component of the Adoption 2002 Program which awards bonus funds to states that exceed benchmarked goals for placing state wards in adoptive homes. These incentive funds are largely being used to strengthen the capacity of agencies and organizations in local communities to provide post adoption support services to adoptive families.

Despite our successes finding safe and loving homes for waiting children, there is still a need for quality adoptive homes. There are currently 459 children listed on the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) who need and want to find families.

The holiday season is a great time to explore the rewards of adoption. Local Family Independence Agency offices and private adoption agencies can provide information about children waiting



JOHN ENGLER, Governor

for families. Interested families can consult the MARE website at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org) and consider making a difference in a child's life.

You don't have to be married, rich or own your own home to adopt a child. You do need to have a big heart, provide a stable, loving home and be willing to help an adoptive child heal from past hurts and troubles.

**For more information call:**

**Michigan Family Independence Agency  
517-373-3513**

**or**

**Michigan Federation of Private Child and Family Agencies (MFPCFA)  
517-485-8552**

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